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ABSTRACT

Practical Research into Organizational Behavior and Effectiveness (PROBE) surveyed public school district superintendents in 1979 to compare their views on education to the lay opinions expressed in the annual Gallup Poll of the public's attitudes toward public schools. The study utilized a one-page questionnaire and focused on time management, job priorities, and stress in selected administrative tasks. The two sample groups consisted of 2,004 randomly selected superintendents, stratified into five categories, and the superintendents of the nation's 200 most populous school districts. The results of the survey indicate that superintendents feel their relationship to their school boards is the most important criterion in evaluating their job performance and handling of student affairs the least important. The study revealed differences in priorities between superintendents in small and large districts. It also evinced a large discrepancy between educators' views of the problems confronting public schools and the public's views. As a consequence, it is recommended that superintendents give greater attention to the development of their managerial and political skills, to increased contact with students, and to their own administrative training program. (Author/WD)

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PROBE* EXAMINES TIME MANAGEMENT, JOB PRIORITIES AND STRESS AMONG PUBLIC SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

During the fall of 1979 with financial support from both the Graduate College and the College of Education at the University of Northern Iowa, PROBE launched its first annual survey of public school district superintendents for purposes of examining their views on education parallel to the lay opinions expressed in the annual Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward Public Schools. The results of this survey were reported earlier in the May issue of The School Administrator at the AASA 1980 Summer Conference, and in the September issue of the Phi Delta Kappan.

The PROBE Survey of Districts Superintendents also focused on time management, job priorities and stress as they apply to selected groups of administrative tasks. That is the substance of this report.

Superintendents in 2175 of the nation's 14,794 public school districts were invited to participate in this survey. Two sample groups were involved. One sample consisted of 2004 randomly selected superintendents; stratification was based on five categories of enrollment and the number of public school districts in each state (including the District of Columbia). A second, slightly overlapping sample consisted of superintendents in the nation's 200 most populous school districts.

A one-page, self-return questionnaire was designed for the study. It was distributed in two mailings in October and November, 1979.

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*PROBE is an acronym for Practical Research into Organizational Behavior and Effectiveness. This independent research organization is headquartered on the University of Northern Iowa campus. The authors co-direct the agency's operations; Dr. Duea is director of research and Dr. Bishop serves as director of the organization's education division.

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Results

Response

A total of 1272 survey responses were received, 1154 from the random sample and 133 from the large district sample consisting of the 200 most populous school districts in the United States. Statistical analyses indicated that random sample selections and returns were highly representative of the nation's public schools in terms of enrollment proportions (x^2=.0056 at 8df).

Time Management

Six groups of administrative reponsibilities, plus "other", were identified for the study. They were: (1) personnel tasks (recruitment, negotiations, etc.); (2) planning and administering the budget; (3) program development and improvements; (4) public relations; (5) school board relations/activities; (6) student affairs; (7) other (to be identified).

Survey participants were asked to rank these tasks according to the amount of time each consumes. The results appear in Tables 1 and 2.

Considerable variability existed between samples and the ratings of the various subgroups in respect to time management. The most consistent aspect was the low position held by the amount of time allocated to student affairs. This responsibility ranked seventh in all groups except in the random sample female subgroup where it ranked sixth.

The rank difference correlation between ratings by the random and large district samples was .321. Between the male and female subgroups (random sample), it was .571. The correlations between the ratings of the various enrollment subgroups ranged from a low of .036 to a high of .857. Generally, less agreement was observed between groups in their task evaluations than was the case with their perceptions of educational problems reported earlier.

The major difference between the ratings of the random and large district samples lay in the area of personnel tasks. Whereas it ranked first in time consumption in the random sample, it ranked sixth among the ratings of large district respondents. Between the male and female subgroups, the greatest disparity between time consumption ratings was found in program development and improvements, it ranked first among female ratings and fourth in the ratings by males.

Two trends were observed in the mean time consumption ranks of the subgroups based on enrollment: (1) the larger the district's enrollment, the

Table 1 Time Consumed by Selected Administrative Responsibilities

	Random Sample									Large Districts		
	Males			Females			Total					
	Absol. Rank	No.	Mean Rank	Absol. Rank	No.	Mean Rank	Absol. Rank	No.	Mean Rank	Absol. Rank	No.	Mean Rank
Personnel tasks	1	942	2.68	3	37	3.24	1	988	2.75	6	111	3.70
Planning and administering the budget	2	949	2.81	4	36	3.44	2	984	2.83	3	110	3.18
School board relations/ activities	3	931	3.03	2	38	2.97	3	976	3.05	1	114	2.18
Program development and improvements	4	924	3.32	1	36	2.75	4	964	3.32	2	113	2.97
Other administrative tasks*	5	139	3.34	7	4	5.25	5	143	3.39	5	10	3.30
Public relations	6	892	3.90	5	35	3.69	6	943	3.95	4	112	3.29
Student affairs	7	864	5.07	6	33	4.36	7	897	5.04	7	106	5.64

*Identified most frequently were office routine and government reports (63), transportation (22), physical plant (15), staff development (7), legal affairs (6), administrative supervision (5).

Table 2 Enrollment Variables in Time Consumed by Administrative Tasks

	Enrollment Groups														
	9999-			1000-4999			5000-9999			10,000-24,999			25,000+		
Task	Absol. Rank	No.	Mean Rank	Absol. Rank	No.	Mean Rank	Absol. Rank	No.	Mean Rank	Absol. Rank	No.	Mean Rank	Absol. Rank	No.	Mean Rank
Personnel tasks	2	450	2.91	1	414	2.53	3	74	2.80	2	37	2.97	3	13	3.15
Plan. and admin. the budget	1	455	2.59	3	407	2.86	6	72	3.76	6	38	3.55	4	12	3.17
School board relations	5	433	3.51	2	408	2.80	1	74	2.19	1	38	2.50	1	13	1.92
Program develop.	3	439	3.38	4	404	3.22	4	73	3.38	5	36	3.47	6	12	3.58
Other administrative tasks*	4	75	3.48	5	52	3.40	2	10	2.60	4	5	3.40	2	1	3.00
Public relations	6	433	3.97	6	388	4.09	5	74	3.47	3	36	3.28	5	12	3.33
Student affairs	7	421	4.53	7	368	5.48	7	63	5.54	7	34	5.58	7	11	5.64

greater the amount of time the superintendent appeared to devote to school board relations/activities; and (2) as enrollment increased, the amount of time devoted to student affairs decreased.

Task Importance vis-a-vis Stress Potential

Participants in the PROBE Survey of District Superintendents also were asked to rate the same seven groups of administrative tasks according to their importance to overall job performance and according to their stress potential--the degree to which they tax physical and emotional reserves. In these instances, however, ratings were based on five point scales (with one low and five high) instead of ordinal rankings.

A particular concern of the researchers was the question of whether or not respondents would be able to make task importance and stress potential ratings with a sufficient degree of independence to permit the drawing of meaningful comparisons. Or, after the first of these ratings was made, would the second simply be a reflexive response?

This concern was allayed, however, when the correlation coefficients (Pearson r) achieved in comparisons of individual time management and stress potential ratings ranged from only .0910 to .4139. The resulting coefficients of determination (r^2) ranged from .0083 to .1713, thereby indicating that, in no instance, was as much as twenty percent of the variance in stress potential accounted for by the variance associated with task importance ratings.

Job Priorities

Tables 3 and 4 summarize the task importance ratings by respondents representing the large district and random samples and the subgroups based on sex and district enrollments.

Intergroup comparisons. Cursory examinations of the ranks associated with the task importance ratings in Table 3 reveal two rather distinct differences between the views of large district and random sample superintendents. The most obvious one is the greater attention that large district superintendents appeared to give to "other administrative tasks", but this warrants little emphasis because of the small percentage of respondents which contributed to the ratings. The other, more meaningful difference is random sample respondents tended to associate more importance with personnel tasks than their counterparts in larger districts.

Table 3 Superintendents Views Concerning the Importance of Selected Administrative Responsibilities

Task	Random Sample									Large Districts		
	Males			Females			Total					
	Rank	No.	Mean Rating	Rank	No.	Mean Rating	Rank	No.	Mean Rating	Rank	No.	Mean Rating
Planning and administering the budget	1	1025	4.00	4	37	3.81	1	1062	4.00	3	119	4.01
School board relations/ activities	2	1013	3.99	1	38	4.24	2	1051	3.99	1	123	4.19
Personnel tasks (recruitment, negotiations, etc.	3	1023	3.91	6	36	3.72	3	1059	3.90	6	119	3.68
Program development and improvements	4	1012	3.86	3	37	3.95	4	1049	3.86	4	118	3.93
Public relations	5	985	3.81	2	37	4.00	5	1022	3.81	5	118	3.86
Student affairs	6	934	3.32	5	35	3.77	6	969	3.34	7	111	3.11
Other administrative tasks*	7	146	3.27	7	3	3.67	7	149	3.28	2	14	4.07
Overall ratings		6138	3.81		223	3.91		6361	3.81		722	3.77

Table 4 District Enrollment Variables in Superintendents' Task Importance Ratings

	Enrollment Groups									
	999-		1000-4999		5000-9999		10,000-24,999		25,000+	
Task	Rank	Mean Rating	Rank	Mean Rating	Rank	Mean Rating	Rank	Mean Rating	Rank	Mean Rating
Plan. and admin. budget	1	3.98	2	4.01	6	3.83	5	4.23	2.5	4.31
School board relations	2	3.87	1	4.03	1	4.31	2	4.56	2.5	4.31
Personnel tasks	3	3.84	3	3.93	3.5	4.08	6	4.00	5	4.00
Program development	4	3.73	4	3.92	3.5	4.08	4	4.31	4	4.25
Public relations	5	3.69	5	3.84	2	4.16	3	4.39	6	3.67
Student affairs	6	3.37	7	3.29	7	3.33	7	3.45	7	3.46
Other admin. tasks	7	3.06	6	3.29	5	4.00	1	4.67	1	5.00
Overall ratings		3.73		3.84		3.98		4.17		4.04

*Identified most frequently were office routine and government reports, transportation, physical plant, staff development, legal affairs, and administrative supervision.

Comparisons of priority ranks based on sex showed that males appeared to give greater emphasis to budgetary and personnel tasks, while females appeared to give more attention to public relations.

Higher correlation was found between large district and random sample job priority ranks than between those for the male and female subgroups. The coefficients obtained were .464 and .286 respectively.

Prior to making statistical comparisons of mean ratings on an intergroup basis, all ratings were converted to comparable standard scales to prevent contamination of the results by intergroup differences in overall ratings. Orthogonal t test comparisons of the resulting coded means for the large district and random samples are shown in Table 5.

Table 5 Comparisons of Task Importance Ratings by Large District and Random Sample Groups

	Random Sample	Large Districts			
Task	Coded $\bar{X}_1$	Coded $\bar{X}_2$	$\bar{X}_1-\bar{X}_2$	t	Error Prob.
Planning and administering the budget	.149	.189	-.040	-0.42	$>.50$
School board relations/activities	.149	.328	-.181	-1.90	$>.05$
Personnel tasks (recruitment, negotiations, etc.)	.072	-.066	.138	1.42	$>.10$
Program development and improvements	.042	.129	-.088	-0.92	$>.30$
Public relations	.002	.070	-.068	-0.76	$>.40$
Student Affairs	-.384	-.513	.129	1.37	$>.10$
Other administrative tasks	-.434	.238	-.672	-2.04*	$<.05$

As shown in the table, only one coded score difference proved significant at the .05 level, that favoring large districts in the importance associated with other administrative tasks (largely office routine, completing governmental reports, physical plant and transportation concerns). Like comparisons of male and female job priority ratings failed to reveal any significant differences.

But analysis of variance did indicate that significant differences existed in job priorities assigned to student affairs and "other administrative tasks" by

enrollment-based random sample subgroups. Subsequent a posteriori testing with Duncan's new multiple range test showed that superintendents in small districts (enrollments of 999 or less) placed more importance on student affairs than their colleagues in districts with enrollments of 1,000 to 4,999 and 10,000 to 24,999. They also rated student affairs considerably higher than the two remaining subgroups (5,000 to 9,999 and 25,000 or more), but limited subgroup numbers precluded the achievement of significance at the .05 level. In job priority ratings for "other administrative tasks", small district superintendents' ratings also exceeded those by the 1,000 to 4,999 subgroup to a significant degree. ($p < .0$)

Intragroup task comparisons. In order to investigate the relative importance of the administrative tasks studied, within-group rating comparisons were drawn with Duncan's new multiple range test. Task importance ratings by the male and female subgroups and large district and random samples were examined, and Kramer's (1957) method for employing the test with unequal replications was utilized.

As shown in Table 5, random sample ratings for "other administrative tasks" and student affairs were exceeded in importance by those for all the remaining tasks ($p < .01$). In turn, the two highest priority tasks--school board relations and planning and administering the budget--also were rated significantly higher than program development ($p < .05$) and public relations ($p < .01$).

Due to the preponderance of male respondents in the random sample, the results from comparisons of task importance ratings by male respondents were identical to random sample findings. And largely because of limited subgroup numbers, no significant differences were elicited in comparisons of random sample females' task importance ratings.

Comparisons of ratings by large district respondents appear in Table 7. Similar to random sample ratings, student affairs was exceeded in importance to a significant degree by all other tasks. School board relations, the highest priority task, also rated significantly higher than personnel tasks.

Stress Potential

As mentioned previously, participants in the PROBE Survey of District Superintendents rated the same seven groups of administrative tasks on the basis of stress potential. For purposes of the study, stress potential was

Table 6 Comparisons of Task Importance Ratings by Random Sample Respondents (Duncan)

Tasks	Coded Means	Differences Between Coded Means						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Other administrative Tasks	-.434	_____	.050	.436**	.476**	.506**	.583**	.583**
2. Student affairs	-.384		_____	.386**	.426**	.456**	.533**	.533**
3. Public relations	.002			_____	.040	.070	.147**	.147**
4. Program development	.042				_____	.030	.107*	107*
5 Personnel tasks	.072					_____	.077	.077
6. Plan and admin. the budget	.149						_____	.000
7. School board relations	.149							_____

* p .05
** p .01

Table 7 Comparisons of Task Importance Ratings by Large District Respondents

Task	Coded Means	Differences Between Coded Means						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Student affairs	-.513	_____	.447**	.583**	.642**	.702**	.751*	.841**
2. Personnel tasks	-.066		_____	.136	.195	.255	.304	.394
3. Public relations	.070			_____	.059	.119	.168	.258
4. Program development	.129				____	.060	.109	.199
5. Plan and admin. budget	.189					_____	.049	.139
6. Other admin. tasks	.238						_____	.090
7. School board relations	.328							_____

* p .05
** p .01

defined as the degree to which a given responsibility taxes one's physical and emotional reserves. Sample and subgroup ratings are summarized in Tables 8 and 9.

Intergroup comparisons. Examination of the ranks associated with mean stress potential ratings reveals some interesting patterns. As to be expected due to the large number of male respondents, the random sample and male subgroup ranks were identical. Different, but still identical, were the ranks associated with ratings in the large district sample and the two subgroups in the random sample with the highest enrollments (10,000 to 24,999 and 25,000 or more). Identical ranks also were achieved by the three random sample subgroups with the lowest enrollments.

The rank difference correlation coefficient obtained in comparisons of large district and random sample findings was .857. Between male and female ratings, it was only .071.

As suggested by the correlation coefficients obtained, the greatest disparities in the rankings of stress potential ratings were found between females' ratings and those by other subgroups. Most obvious among the disparities was the tendency of female respondents to associate greater stress with school board relations and public relations. They rated "other administrative tasks" considerably lower than other groups (ranked seventh as compared to first through third by other groups), but the limited number of responses in this area--only three--discouraged the forming of any valid conclusions regarding this particular finding.

Consistent with the data treatments employed in analyzing task importance ratings, stress potential ratings were coded in reference to overall means and standard deviations before other comparisons were made. As before, this standardization process served to eliminate bias based on overall rating differentials.

Table 10 shows t radio comparisons of stress potential ratings by the large district and random sample groups, one of which proved statistically significant. Members of the large district sample rated the stress associated with school board relations and activities significantly higher than superintendents included in the random sample ($p < .01$).

Table 8 Stress Potential Associated With Selected Administrative Tasks

Tasks	Random Sample									Large Districts		
	Males			Females			Total					
	Rank	No.	Mean Rating	Rank	No.	Mean Rating	Rank	No.	Mean Rating	Rank	No.	Mean Rating
Other administrative tasks*	1	143	3.88	7	3	2.67	1	146	3.86	2	13	3.85
Personnel tasks	2	1004	3.74	3	37	3.41	2	1041	3.73	3	111	3.54
School board relations	3	995	3.61	1	39	3.85	3	1034	3.62	1	116	4.05
Plan and admin. budget	4	1004	3.31	4	38	3.26	4	1042	3.30	5	111	3.36
Public relations	5	976	3.19	2	36	3.58	5	1012	3.20	4	111	3.37
Program development	6	988	2.91	5	37	3.03	6	1025	2.92	6	111	2.85
Student affairs	7	926	2.69	6	38	2.97	7	964	2.71	7	107	2.63
Overall ratings			3.27			3.25			3.27			3.32

*Identified most frequently were office routine and governmental reports, transportation, physical plant, staff development, legal affairs, and administrative supervision.

Table 9 District Enrollment Variables in Superintendents' Stress Potential Ratings

Tasks	Enrollment Subgroups: 999- Rank	999- Mean Rating	1000-4999 Rank	1000-4999 Mean Rating	5000-9999 Rank	5000-9999 Mean Rating	10,000-24,999 Rank	10,000-24,999 Mean Rating	25,000+ Rank	25,000+ Mean Rating
1. Other administrative tasks*	1	3.89	1	3.82	1	4.00	3	3.67	3	4.00
2. Personnel tasks	2	3.63	2	3.80	2	3.96	2	3.70	2	4.17
3. School board relations	3	3.50	3	3.66	3	3.89	1	3.83	1	4.58
4. Plan and admin. budget	4	3.28	4	3.32	4	3.37	5	3.18	5	3.58
5. Public relations	5	3.15	5	3.21	5	3.21	4	3.58	4	3.82
6. Program development	6	2.92	6	2.94	6	2.92	6	2.53	6	3.55
7. Student affairs	7	2.82	7	2.61	7	2.69	7	2.32	7	2.89
Overall ratings		3.24		3.28		3.36		3.21		3.81

*Identified most frequently were office routine and governmental reports, transportation, physical plant, staff development, legal affairs, and administrative supervision.

Table 10 Comparisons of Stress Potential Ratings by the Large District and Random Samples

Tasks	Random Sample Coded $\bar{X}_1$	Large District Coded $\bar{X}_2$	$\bar{X}_1-\bar{X}_2$	t	Error Prob.
Other administrative tasks	.479	.423	.056	0.19	>.50
Personnel tasks	.376	.178	.198	1.94	>.50
School board relations/activities	.285	.588	-.302	-3.01**	<.01
Plan and admin. the budget	.029	.033	-.004	- .04	>.50
Public relations	-.054	.040	-.094	-1.02	>.30
Program development/improvements	-.285	-.379	.094	1.13	>.20
Student affairs	-.457	-.556	.099	1.03	>.30

** $p<.01$

Table 11 shows like comparisons between the stress potential ratings of sex groups in the random sample. Here again, only one significant difference was identified. Female superintendents were found to have rated public relations significantly more stressful than their male counterparts (p .05).

Table 11 Sex Variable Comparisons of Stress Potential Ratings

Tasks	Males Coded $\bar{X}_1$	Females Coded $\bar{X}_2$	$\bar{X}_1-\bar{X}_2$	t	Error Prob.
Other administrative tasks	.499	-.462	.961	1.62	>.10
Personnel tasks	.385	.123	.263	1.10	>.10
School relations/activities	.278	.472	-.194	-1.15	>.30
Plan. and admin. budget	.031	.010	.021	0.13	>.50
Public relations	-.066	.264	-.330	-2.13*	<.05
Program development/improvements	-.288	-.177	-.111	-0.81	>.40
Student affairs	-.467	-.219	-.248	-1.59	>.10

* $p<.05$

Analysis of variance indicated the presence of significant differences among the ratings of enrollment subgroups only in the area of student affairs. The

results of a posteriori comparisons with Duncan's new multiple range test are shown in Table 12.

Table 12 Comparisons of District Enrollment Variables in Stress Potencial Ratings for Student Affairs (Duncan)

Enrollment Subgroups		Coded Means	Differences Between Coded Means				
			1	2	3	4	5
1.	25,000 or more	-.780	____	.071	.227	.235	.437
2.	10,000 - 24,999	-.709		____	.156	.164	.366*
3.	5,000 - 9,999	-.553			____	.008	.210
4.	1,000 - 4,999	-.545				____	.202**
5.	999 or less	-.343					____

* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$

As shown in Table 18, superintendents in the 999 or less enrollment subgroup viewed student affairs as being significantly more stressful than their colleagues in districts with enrollments of 1,000 to 4,999 ($p < .01$) and 10,000 - 24,999 ($p < .05$).

Intragroup comparisons. Duncan's new multiple range test also was used to investigate the relative degree of stress associated with selected administrative tasks on an intragroup basis. Random sample findings appear in Table 13.

In all but two instances in the random sample, each task was rated significantly more stressful than the others that followed. The two exceptions were that "other administrative tasks" failed to exceed personnel tasks and planning and administering the budget failed to exceed public relations. At the extremes, "other administrative tasks" and personnel tasks were rated significantly more stressful than all of the other tasks evaluated, and significantly less stress was associated with student affairs than with any other task.

As with job priority ratings, the findings with the male subgroup were almost identical to those for the total random sample. The lone exception was that planning and administering the budget also was found to be more stressful than public relations ($p < .05$).

Table 13 Comparisons of Stress Potential Ratings by Random Sample Respondents (Duncan)

Tasks	Coded Means	Differences Between Coded Means						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Student affairs	-.457	____	.172**	.404**	.486**	.742**	.834**	.942**
2. Program development	-.285		____	.232**	.314**	.570**	.662**	.770**
3. Public relations	-.053			____	.082	.338**	.430**	.538**
4. Plan and admin. budget	.029				____	.256**	.348**	.456**
5. School board relations	.285					____	.092*	.200*
6. Personnel tasks	.377						____	.108
7. Other admin. tasks	.485							____

* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$

Only two significant differences were uncovered in the analysis of female subgroup ratings. The ratings for school board relations, which was identified as the most stressful activity, exceeded those for both program development and student affairs. As before, the limited number of female responses discouraged the elicitation of other significant findings.

Among the comparisons of large district stress potential ratings shown in Table 14, significantly greater stress was associated with school board relations and activities than with all other responsibilities except "other administrative tasks". Conversely, less stress potential was associated with student affairs than all tasks but program development and improvements. Ratings for the latter, in turn, were exceeded by those for each of the remaining tasks.

Comparisons Involving College and University Presidents' Views

It is possible to compare the task evaluations of over 500 college and university presidents with those of superintendents in the nation's public schools on the basis of similar data collected in the PROBE Institutional President Survey which also was conducted during the 1979-1980 academic year. The only modifications in the tasks evaluated in the higher education survey were that alumni affairs and fund raising was substituted for public relations, and governing board relations replaced school board relations. Due to rather distinct differences between the response tendencies of subgroups representing public and private institutions, they were treated as discrete groups in comparative analyses; 206 responses were received from presidents of public institutions and 336 came from the heads of private colleges and universities.

Upon examination of the results, it proved unfeasible to compare superintendents' and college and university presidents' ratings in the area of alumni affairs and fund raising vs. public relations and in the area of "other administrative tasks" due to rather obvious focal differences. As it turned out, the bulk of the college and university heads who chose to make use of the "other" option among administrative tasks identified this option as pertaining to public relations and civic affairs. Superintendents were inclined to identify other tasks as office routine and the filing of governmental reports.

It is possible, however, to make related group comparisons in this area, and a high degree of comparability exists in the other five tasks evaluated.

Table 14 Comparisons of Stress Potential Ratings by Large District Respondents (Duncan)

Tasks	Coded Means	Differences Between Coded Means						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Student affairs	-.556	---	.177	.589**	.596**	.734**	.979**	1.144**
2. Program development	-.379		----	.412**	.419**	.557**	.802*	.967**
3. Plan and admin. budget	.003			----	.007	.145	.390	.555**
4. Public relations	.040				----	.138	.383	.548**
5. Personnel tasks	.178					----	.245	.410**
6. Other administrative tasks	.423						----	.165
7. School board relations	.588							-----

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

An overview of the task evaluations by the four comparison groups--public college and university presidents, private institutional presidents, and large district and random sample superintendents--tended to indicate that sponsorship status (the source of operating funds) is an important influence in these ratings. This was supported by rank difference correlation analysis which revealed considerably closer relationships to exist between the ratings of the three groups of administrators who represented public institutions. In fact, negative correlations were even found to exist between the job priority ratings of private college and university presidents and those of public institutional presidents and random sample superintendents.

Time mangement ratings. Although no provisions were made for identifying the actual time spent in carrying out the administrative tasks identified, ordinal time consumption rankings were obtained both from college and university presidents and from superintendents in public school districts. The time consumption ranks achieved by the ratings of the four comparison groups are shown in Table 15.

Table 15 Ordinal Comparisons of the Time Allocated to Selected Administrative Tasks

	Time Consumption Ranks			
	College/University Presidents		Public School Superintendents	
Administrative Tasks	Public Institutions	Private Institutions	Random Sample	Large Districts
Alumni affairs and fund raising (presidents)/public relations (superintendents)	7*	1*	6*	6*
Planning and administering the budget	1	2	2	3
Personnel tasks (recruitment, negotiations, etc.)	4	6	1	6
Governing board relations/school board relations	3	4	3	1
Program development and improvements	2	3	4	2
Student affairs	6	7	7	7
Other administrative tasks	5*	5*	5*	5*

*The tasks combined in these areas are incompatible; the only meaningful comparisons are those made directly between college administrator groups and those made directly between superintendent groups.

Aside from the fact that random sample superintendents appeared to devote considerably more time to personnel tasks and that large district superintendents allocated a great deal more time to school board (governing board) relations, time allocations for the various tasks among the four administrator groups were fairly consistent. In related group comparisons, however, presidents of private colleges and universities gave more time to alumni affairs and fund raising than their counterparts in public institutions (time ranks were one and seven respectively.)

Job priority ratings. Table 16 summarizes comparisons of job priority ratings by the four comparison groups: public college and university presidents, presidents of private institutions, random sample public school district superintendents, and large district superintendents.

Table 16 Statistical Comparisons of Mean Job Priority Ratings*

	College/University Presidents		Public School Superintendents	
	1	2	3	4
Administrative Tasks	Public Institutions	Private Institutions	Random Sample	Large Districts
Alumni affairs and fund raising (presidents)/public relations (superintendents)	(-2)**	(+1)**	(0)**	(0)**
Planning and administering the budget	(+2,3)	(-1)	(-1)	(0)
Personnel tasks (recruitment, negotiations, etc.)	(+2)	(-1,3)	(+2)	(0)
Governing board relations/school board relations	(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)
Program development and improvements	(+2,3)	(-1)	(-1)	(0)
Student affairs	(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)
Other administrative tasks	(0)**	(0)**	(-4)**	(+3)**

* Symbols should be interpreted as follows: (+) shows which groups' ratings (by column number) are exceeded statistically by that group's mean rating; (-) indicates which groups' mean ratings (by column number) are statistically superior to that group's mean rating; (0) indicates that no statistically significant differences were observed.

** The tasks combined in these areas are incompatible; the only meaningful comparisons are those made directly between college administrator groups and those made directly between superintendent groups. Other intergroup differences are not shown in the table.

Differences in task priority ratings were as follows: (1) as with time allocations, the presidents of private colleges and universities rated alumni affairs and fund raising more important than their counterparts in public institutions; (2) public college and university presidents associated higher priorities with both planning and administering the budget and program development and improvements than private institutional presidents and random sample superintendents; (3) both public institutional presidents and random sample superintendents rated personnel tasks higher than private college and university presidents; and (4) large district superintendents associated greater importance with "other administrative tasks" (largely office routine and filing governmental reports) than random sample superintendents did.

Stress potential ratings. Like comparisons were made between the four groups' stress potential ratings for the various tasks. The results appear in Table 17.

Table 17 Statistical Comparisons of Stress Potential Ratings*

	College/University Presidents		Public School Superintendents	
	1	2	3	4
Administrative Tasks	Public Institutions	Private Institutions	Random Sample	Large Districts
Alumni affairs and fund raising/ public relations	(-2)**	(+1)**	(0)**	(0)**
Planning and administering the budget	(+3, 4)	(+3, 4)	(-1,2)	(-1,2)
Personnel tasks (recruitment, negotiations, etc.)	(0)	(-3)	(+2)	(0)
Governing board relations/school board relations	(+2) (-4)	(-1,3, 4)	(+2)(-4)	(+1,2,3)
Program development and improvements	(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)
Student affairs	(+3, 4)	(0)	(-1)	(-1)
Other administrative tasks	(0)**	(0)**	(0)**	(0)**

* Symbols should be interpreted as follows: (+) shows which groups' ratings (by column number) are exceeded statistically by that group's mean rating; (-) indicates which groups' mean ratings (by column number) are statistically superior to that group's mean rating; (0) indicates that no statistically significant differences were observed.

** The tasks combined in these areas are incompatible; the only meaningful comparisons are those made directly between college administrator groups and those made directly between superintendent groups. Other intergroup differences are not shown in the table.

The most clearcut difference between the ratings of superintendents and higher education administrators was found in the amount of stress associated with planning and administering the budget; the presidents of both public and private institutions indicated that this area produced significantly more stress than did either group of superintendents. Public college and university presidents also associated greater stress than either group of superintendents with planning and administering the budget and student affairs. And they perceived governing board relations as being more stressful than private institutional presidents did. Private institutional presidents associated greater stress with alumni affairs and fund raising than did public college and university presidents.

The stress potential ratings of random sample superintendents exceeded those by private college and university presidents in two areas: personnel tasks and governing board (school board) relations. The only area perceived to be more stressful by large district superintendents was governing board (school board) relations; this group rated it significantly higher than each of the other comparison groups.

Discussion

Generally, it would appear that superintendents, as a group, feel that their handling of student affairs is least important among the criteria studied as a basis for evaluating overall job performance. Their relationships with their school boards was considered the most important criterion. Correspondingly, the superintendents polled appeared to agree that student affairs generate less stress than each of the other groups of responsibilities evaluated. On the other hand, personnel tasks, school board relations, and "other administrative tasks" were conceded to be the greatest producers of stress among the administrative responsibilities examined.

The most obvious trend revealed by comparisons of superintendents' administrative responsibility ratings was the fact that, as district size increases, the superintendent becomes increasingly removed from the day-to-day operations of the schools and the people involved. This trend was observed to varying degrees in all three aspects of task evaluation involved in the study--in time management, in job priorities and in stress potential ratings. Supporting this observation, was the fact that small district superintendents (those in districts having enrollments of 999 or less) gave considerably greater weight, in terms of time

allocations, to personnel tasks and student affairs than their colleagues in the nation's largest districts.

Superintendents in larger districts appeared to devote more time to school board relations, program development and improvements, and public relations than superintendents in smaller districts. The time allocated to planning and administering the budget was fairly consistent across enrollment categories, but there was a slight decrease in this activity in larger districts where larger administrative staffs and greater specialization may well afford superintendents opportunities to delegate a greater share of this responsibility to school business officials.

Despite the fact that superintendents in smaller districts gave somewhat more attention to student affairs, this area received the least recognition of any of the administrative responsibilities examined. When compared with those for other responsibilities in both the random and large district samples and among the various subgroups, student affairs generally ranked seventh (and last) in time consumed, sixth in priority, and seventh in stress potential. However, it ranked one place higher than the norm in each instance in the ratings of female superintendents in the random sample.

While it is inevitable that the various managerial functions that compete for superintendents' time and attention will, by necessity, crowd student affairs into the background, it is imperative that superintendents not lose touch with students' activities, reactions and viewpoints. One must not forget that students are the very reason why school exist. The measure of the schools and their programs are the effects that they have on students' lives.

Therefore, it is important that superintendents set aside time to observe and interact with students, preferably within the milieu of the students' environment. Student advisory groups may be a desirable source of student input but, no matter how effective they are perceived to be, they truly cannot take the place of direct observations and contacts as means for keeping a finger on the pulse of school operations.

In the amount of time consumed, the greatest disparity between the ratings of random sample and large district superintendents lay in the area of personnel tasks (recruitment, negotiations, etc.). Whereas this area of administrative responsibility ranked first in the amount of time consumed according to random sample responses, it ranked sixth in the large district ratings. (Apparently, a greater share of this responsibility is assumed by personnel directors in larger districts.) Personnel tasks ranked first and third respectively in task importance and second and third in terms of stress potential.

Much of what was said about gaining insights into student activities, reactions and viewpoints applies equally to administrative relations with both certified and classified personnel. The improved visibility and mutual understandings that could result may serve to moderate militancy and adversarialism in personnel relations and, in turn, ease the inordinate amount of stress associated with this area of administrative functioning.

Although public relations functions ranked rather low in all three aspects of task evaluation (time, importance and stress), considerable differences exist between PROBE's findings regarding educators views of the problems that confront public schools and those of the public obtained by the Gallup Poll. In fact, negative correlations were found to exist between the opinions of the two groups. Certainly, this opinion gap points up the need for improved public relations efforts by the schools. Almost needless to say, the likelihood that the problems faced by public education will be solved without public confidence and support is rather dim.

What has been learned in the course of this study about the perceptions of district superintendents regarding the importance of selected administrative responsibilities and the physical and emotional stress associated with them could well serve as a starting point for the examination and, where needed, the realignment of priorities and emphases in administrator training programs sponsored by the nation's colleges and universities. Seemingly, the following recommendations are in order. They apply equally to both preservice and in-service programs.

1. Attention should be given to the development of time management skills that reflect an awareness of the importance and stress associated with the various administrative responsibilities that compete for one's time and energies.

2. Those who are responsible for the design and implementation of administrative training programs should never lose sight of the need to continually re-examine and improve upon program components related to budget planning and administration. Especially needed at this time are understandings and skills appropriate to managing enrollment declines and the fiscal consequences of such declines.

3. Increased emphases should be given to the organizational and political skills necessary for forging effective working relationships with lay boards. All too frequently, the aspiring superintendent receives the bulk of his training in the areas of business management, curriculum development and supervision,

and personnel considerations but is left largely to his own devices in developing positive working relationships with his school board.

4. Continuing attention also needs to be given to improved instruction in the area of personnel management. As with the development of budgetary skills, continuing development is needed in the area of managing the consequences of enrollment and fiscal declines.

5. Despite the low priority and stress potential ratings associated with public relations, disparities in the findings of the PROBE Survey of District Superintendents and lay opinions on educational problems expressed in the Gallup Polls suggest that much remains to be done in this area. School administrators simply must be convinced of both the importance and the value of effective public relations. And they must be encouraged to accept this responsibility.

This was the one area where female administrators registered more stress than their male counterparts. It was not determined if this reaction was in response to pressures of societal male chauvinism or whether it represented a lack of public relations training and the confidence that is its concomitant. In either event, attention should be given to this phenomenon in administrator training programs and appropriate compensatory measures taken.

6. Last but certainly not least, school administrators must be encouraged to keep in touch with the activities, reactions and viewpoints of students. This is not only important to program evaluation and improvements; quality programs and positive relations with students are the very foundations upon which effective public relation are based.

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